

East Asian Usage of Quotation Marks - Updates for Unicode Core Specification

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This is a proposal to update the text regarding quotation marks in Unicode Core Specification [Chapter 6 Writing Systems and Punctuation](#), [section 6.2.6 Language-Based Usage of Quotation Marks](#) on [East Asian Usage](#) and its related paragraphs.

Current text (Unicode 17.0)

East Asian Usage. The glyph for each quotation mark character for an Asian character set occupies predominantly a single quadrant of the character cell. The quadrant used depends on whether the character is opening or closing and whether the glyph is for use with horizontal or vertical text.

The pairs of quotation characters are listed in *Table 6-5*.

Table 6-5. East Asian Quotation Marks

Style	Opening	Closing
Corner bracket	300C	300D
White corner bracket	300E	300F
Double prime	301D	301F

Glyph Variation in East Asian Usage. In East Asian usage, the glyphs for “double-prime” quotation marks U+301D 〰 REVERSED DOUBLE PRIME QUOTATION MARK and U+301F 〸 LOW DOUBLE PRIME QUOTATION MARK consist of a pair of wedges, slanted either forward or backward, with the tips of the wedges pointing either up or down. In a pair of double-prime quotes, the closing and the opening character of the pair slant in opposite directions. Two common variations exist, as shown in *Figure 6-4*. To confuse matters more, another form of double-prime quotation marks is used with Western-style horizontal text, in addition to the curly single or double quotes.

Figure 6-4. Asian Quotation Marks

Horizontal and vertical glyphs

『字内』

Glyphs for overloaded character codes

“字内” “Text”

Font style-based glyph alternates

”字内” “字内”

Three pairs of quotation marks are used with Western-style horizontal text, as shown in *Table 6-6*.

Table 6-6. Opening and Closing Forms

Style	Opening	Closing	Comment
Single	2018	2019	Rendered as “wide” character
Double	201C	201D	Rendered as “wide” character
Double prime	301D	301E	

Overloaded Character Codes. The character codes for standard quotes can refer to regular narrow quotes from a Latin font used with Latin text as well as to wide quotes from an Asian font used with other wide characters. This situation can be handled with some success where the text is marked up with language tags. For more information on narrow and wide characters, see Unicode Standard Annex #11, “East Asian Width.”

Issues with current text

There are multiple issues with the current text:

1. Korean (South Korea) uses U+201C “ and U+201D ” for quotation marks following Latin width;
2. Korean (North Korea) uses U+300A 《 and U+300B 》 for quotation marks;
3. Japanese generally does not use U+301D ` and U+301E ´ for quotation in horizontal texts; these symbols are only use sparingly inside vertical texts [JLReq];
4. Traditional Chinese (outside of PRC) uses U+300C 「 and U+300D 」 exclusively, and does not use U+201C “ and U+201D ” for Chinese texts;
5. Simplified Chinese (PRC) uses U+201C “ and U+201D ” for Chinese horizontal texts while also uses U+300C 「 and U+300D 」 for Chinese vertical texts.

Some of the horizontal/vertical differences is covered inside [Unicode Standard Annex #50: Unicode Vertical Text Layout](#), which is not present in the paragraphs.

The glyphs used can be separated into two groups: ones that uses a comma-like shape and ones that take up half-width space. The comma-like glyph shapes can be referenced to the previous section [Glyph Variation in Curly Quotes](#) as either curly style or mirrored wedge style. Table 6-4 *Models of Visual Relationship between Quote Glyphs* is attached below for subsequent reference.

Table 6-4. Models of Visual Relationship between Quote Glyphs

Model	2018	2019	201A	201B	201C	201D	201E	201F
Rotated model (curly glyph style)	‘	’	‚	‚	“	”	”	”
Rotated model (wedge glyph style)	‚	‚	‚	‚	“	”	”	”
Mirrored model (Tahoma, Verdana)	‚	‚	‚	‚	“	”	”	”

Proposed updated text

East Asian Usage. There are predominantly two sets of quotation marks in use for East Asian texts: comma-like glyphs in the shape of either curly style or mirrored wedge style (specified in *Table 6-4*) or bracket-like glyphs.

Comma-like Quotation Marks in Asian Text. East Asian texts uses U+201C “, U+201D ”, U+2019 ‘ and U+201A ’ inside horizontal texts. These characters are usually shaped with curly style in *Table 6-4*. For Chinese (PRC) and Japanese text, these quotation marks predominantly occupy a single quadrant in a full-width character cell. The quadrant used depends on whether the character is opening or closing and whether the glyph is for use with horizontal or vertical text.

For Korean text, these quotation marks should be styled like English quotation marks and take up proportional-width (or half-width) character cell. For Chinese (outside of PRC) text, as the preferred quotation marks is bracket-like glyphs (see section *Bracket-like Quotation Marks*), these comma-like quotation marks are also styled as English quotation marks with proportional-width character cell to match with English text and avoid excessive space for apostrophe (e.g. I’ m <Editor note: make the quote full space>).

An alternative set of comma-like quotation marks is the pair U+301D 〃 and U+301F 〴. These resembles the double prime symbol, or may be styled similar to the mirrored wedge shape of U+201E and U+201F in *Table 6-4*, respectively. These are only used by Japanese in horizontal text. The character U+301E 〵 is a mirrored version of U+301D and is a mistaken analogue to U+201D, however modern online texts will pair U+301D and U+301E in horizontal texts even though no official standards issue such guidance. U+301F should be preferred in official text to display correctly for both horizontal and vertical text.

Table 6-5. East Asian Comma-like Quotation Marks

Style	Opening	Closing	Comment
Single	2018	2019	Usually rendered as “wide” character
Double	201C	201D	Usually rendered as “wide” character
Double prime	301D	301F	Some text may use 301E as closing

Overloaded Character Codes. The character codes for standard quotes can refer to both the regular narrow quotes from a Latin font for Latin text usage as well as to wide quotes from an Asian font used with other wide characters. This situation can be handled with some success where the text is marked up with language tags. For more information on narrow and wide characters, see Unicode Standard Annex #11, “East Asian Width.”

Alternatively, the Unicode Variation Selector 1 and 2 may be chosen by user to enforce which style of quotes to be used, i.e. VS1 for narrow quotes in proportional-width and VS2 for wide quotes in full-width. For more information on variation selector, see [Chapter 23.4, Variation Selectors](#).

Comma-like Quotation Marks in Vertical Text. In vertical East Asian text, U+201C “, U+201D ”, U+2019 ‘ and U+201A ’ are shown similar to the mirrored wedge shapes of U+201E, U+201F, U+201A and U+201B in *Table 6-4*, respectively. Opening marks are positioned at the bottom right, while closing marks appear at the top left.

If the enclosed content is Latin text, these quotation marks should instead be rotated without changing the glyphs and follows Latin typographic conventions.

An exception is made for Chinese (PRC): when typesetting these quotation marks in vertical text, they should be substituted with the vertical forms of U+300C 「, U+300D 」, U+300E 『, and U+300F 』, respectively. For best practices of typesetting vertical punctuations, implementors may reference Unicode Standard Annex #50, “Unicode Vertical Text Layout”.

Another exception involves the Sibe script used in PRC, which is a variant of Manchu (Mongolian). The Sibe script consistently use the curly style quotation marks in *Table 6-4*. However, because the Sibe script is written vertically from left to right — unlike CJK scripts which run right to left in vertical layout — the quotation marks remain upright with opening marks at the bottom left, and closing marks at the top right. This behaviour may be enforced by end users by using Unicode Variation Selector 3.

Figure 6-4. Asian Comma-like Quotation Marks

	Horizontal text	Vertical text
Korean	“문자”	문자
Japanese	“文字” Non-standard: `文字、`	文字
Chinese (PRC)	“文字”	「文字」
Chinese (outside of PRC)	Preferred: “文字” Alternative: “文字”	文字
Sibe script (PRC)	“ᡠᡳᡵᡠ”	ᡠᡳᡵᡠ
Other usages	`文字`	“English”

Bracket-like Quotation Marks. The other group of quotation marks used in East Asian text are bracket-like, which take up half of a character cell. The assigned character codepoint should be the same in both horizontal and vertical text, see *Vertical Forms* in [Section 6.2.14](#),

[CJK Compatibility Forms](#) for more details. For Japanese and Chinese, the quotation marks are U+300C 「, U+300D 」, U+300E 『, and U+300F 』. For Korean (North Korea), the quotation marks are U+300A 《, U+300B 》, U+3008 ‹, and U+3009 ›. These quotation marks need to be rotated 90 degrees clockwise in vertical text as specified in UAX #50.

Table 6-6. East Asian Bracket-like Quotation Marks

Style	Opening	Closing
Corner bracket	300C	300D
White corner bracket	300E	300F
Double angle bracket	300A	300B
Single angle bracket	3008	3009

That is all.

References

JLReq (Requirements for Japanese Text Layout 日本語組版処理の要件)
<https://www.w3.org/TR/jlreq/>

CLReq (Requirements for Chinese Text Layout 中文排版需求)
<https://www.w3.org/TR/clreq/>

CheonHyeong, Sim (2025-01-08). "L2/25-028: Proposal to Add VS3 for Sibe Quotation Marks" <https://www.unicode.org/L2/L2025/25028-vs3-sibe-quotation-marks.pdf>